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Note verbale dated 4 March 2011 from the Permanent Mission of Afghanistan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

The Permanent Mission of Afghanistan to the United Nations hereby requests that the letter dated 1 March 2011 from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Afghanistan, Zalmai Rassoul, addressed to the Secretary-General be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

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Annex to the note verbale dated 4 March 2011 from the Permanent Mission of Afghanistan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

1 March 2011

On behalf of the Government and people of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, I have the honour to express profound gratitude and appreciation for the important support rendered by the United Nations for lasting peace, security and development in Afghanistan. This support has been crucial for the progress in the past 10 years towards a stable and prosperous nation.

It is in this spirit that I convey the request of my Government to renew the mandate of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) for an additional 12 months beyond 23 March 2011, along with due consideration for the recommendations conveyed in this letter.

The Afghan Government requests a comprehensive review of the mandate in the next six months. We consider this effort to be consistent with principles outlined in the Kabul and London communiqués, which seek to achieve the objective of restoring Afghan ownership.

While stressing the need for the continued role and assistance of the United Nations in the years ahead, the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan is of the view that UNAMA's future mandate should correspond with the principles of Afghan leadership and ownership, to which Afghanistan, the United Nations and other international partners committed at the international Kabul Conference in July last year.

The Islamic Republic of Afghanistan remains convinced that a sustainable transition process will best be achieved with the support of the United Nations and other international partners. In this context, it is our sincere hope to see UNAMA's mandate renewed with incorporation of the Kabul process, envisaging concrete measures that ensure coherence with the goals of the transition, and to achieving integration and coordination of United Nations bodies as "One United Nations".

The Government of Afghanistan requests that the new mandate include the following:

- An emphasis on the transition as its central focus. The underlying imperative to transition full responsibility for security, governance and development to Afghan leadership by 2014 should guide the work of UNAMA and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General
- While retaining UNAMA's formal role as the Co-chair of the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board, the mandate would benefit from underscoring UNAMA's responsibility to promote coherence in the international community's support for the Afghan-defined and Afghan-led development strategy
- Increased focus should be given to channelling aid through the Afghan budget as an essential measure for implementing the Afghan national priority programme, UNAMA's role to support the mobilization of resources, coordination of international donors and organizations, and direction of the United Nations-related contributions and agencies, must be focused on the Afghan national priorities and strengthening Afghan Government institutions

- The role of UNAMA in improving civil-military coordination with the International Security Assistance Force should be recalibrated to reflect the aim of the transition process, in order to support an Afghan-led development and stabilization process

- The Government of Afghanistan underscores Afghan ownership and lead in the reconciliation and reintegration efforts. To this end, UNAMA's good offices can support this process if requested by the Government of Afghanistan

- While the Government of Afghanistan is committed to the electoral reform process as reflected in the Kabul communiqué, we emphasize that the implementation of this reform is the responsibility of the Afghan Government, and therefore it is not necessary to make references to electoral reform in the new UNAMA mandate

- The Government of Afghanistan believes UNAMA's adjusted role during the transition could be best fulfilled by limiting its offices to the six recognized zones throughout the country. We look forward in assessing the overall presence of UNAMA offices in the country during the review of the mandate in the next six months

- We believe that UNAMA's support for improving governance and the rule of law would be achieved best through strengthening the effort of the Government of Afghanistan in accordance with the Kabul process. We further believe that it is not necessary to refer to UNAMA's activities at the subnational level in the mandate and thus it should be considered instead in the context of transition

- On humanitarian assistance, UNAMA should have a coordinating role in facilitating the delivery of humanitarian assistance in accordance with humanitarian principles. However, the Afghan Government's role should be defined as central in the area of humanitarian assistance based on its sovereign rights

- United Nations development and humanitarian activities should be geared towards "One United Nations". The UNAMA mandate should reflect the need for integrated United Nations activities in Afghanistan over the next three years

We are of the conviction that the aforementioned suggestions, which are based on the principles of the transition that was jointly agreed between Afghanistan and the international community, will benefit a more transparent and effective United Nations role, in light of the changing environment on the ground in Afghanistan. We look forward to maintaining close contact to finalize UNAMA's mandate for this year, as well as conducting a comprehensive review of the Mission's mandate within the next six months.

Allow me to reiterate the deep gratitude and appreciation of the people and Government of Afghanistan for the steadfast support of the United Nations for lasting peace, stability and prosperity in Afghanistan.

(*Signed*) Dr. Zalmai **Rassoul**
Minister for Foreign Affairs
Islamic Republic of Afghanistan